



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

# Memorandum

## Federal Highway Administration

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Subject: INFORMATION: Environmental Streamlining  
Successful Practices/Pilot Tool Kit: A compendium  
of efforts underway.

Date: May 21, 1999

For:  
From: Cynthia J. Burbank  
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Reply to: HENP

TO: FHWA Division Administrators  
Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers

The TEA-21 requires the Department of Transportation to develop and implement improved coordinated environmental review processes for highway and transit projects. Working with FTA, OST, FHWA field offices, and other Federal agency representatives, we are currently in the process of identifying and defining ways to improve and streamline environmental reviews and approaches to project development. Among other things, these efforts include recognizing successful initiatives that are already underway and promoting creative project development streamlining solutions at state, regional, and local levels through partnerships, programmatic agreements or pilots.

Recognizing that the most viable solutions are local ones developed over a period of time, we encourage field offices to begin to work with state and local transportation agencies and Federal resource/environmental agencies to advance such efforts. Several efforts are already underway. The materials provided in the information tool kit are examples of successful practices, regional streamlining efforts, and pilot programs. Here is a brief overview of the package:

**Successful Practices:** These include programmatic agreements, partnering efforts, and Memoranda of Understanding undertaken in various states by State DOTs, with local Resource Agencies and Federal partners. Some aim to consolidate reviews, review times, reinforce concurrent decision making, or establish commitment to collaboratively deliver quality documents. Others have taken steps to evaluate and measure the benefits of these practices.

Cost reimbursement for work associated with improved project development is eligible for federal - aid reimbursement under TEA-21. Draft guidance on ways that states and transit agencies may use a variety of Federal authorities to address workload and resource shortages is included.

**Regional Environmental Streamlining Efforts** : FHWA's Eastern Resource Center, the FHWA, MD, PA, DE, VA, WV Divisions, FTA Region 3, EPA Region 3, along with State and Resource agency partners have formed the Mid-Atlantic Transportation and Environment Streamlining Task Force in January. A regional agreement and related materials are enclosed.

**Pilot Proposals** : Currently, we are encouraging field offices to support and partner with local or regional agencies that may want to test a "pilot" effort as applied to a single project or the development of a better process. These can be as formal or informal as needed.

AASHTO has submitted a pilot program proposal and EPA has targeted the development of 18 pilot projects (not all are aimed at streamlining) as a part of their TEA-21 strategy.

We are discussing these with AASHTO and EPA and expect, in the near future, to determine how to coordinate these initiatives. In the meantime, you should work with participating State DOTs and EPA regions to help them shape their efforts.

The *Environmental Streamlining Successful Practices/Pilot Tool Kit* can also be found on the Environment and Planning web site: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/index.htm>. The web site features status reports on other environmental streamlining activities, field office and headquarters contacts. It will be updated regularly. We would appreciate your assistance in identifying additional practices, agreements and activities, including transit activities.

Please share this with your regional, state, and local partners. For more information, contact: Lucy Garliauskas, 202-366-2068.

cc: FHWA Resource Center Directors  
FTA Regional Administrators